

THE TRANSPORTATION LINK



Vol. 5 Number 10

October 1998



Luz Araoz Hopewell,
*Director of the
Office of Small and
Disadvantaged
Business Utilization*

October 1 marks the beginning of the new fiscal year at DOT and a host of new small business opportunities for you to take advantage of. These opportunities are outlined in the *Fiscal Year 99 Procurement Forecast* highlighted in this issue.

Similarly, we have developed a new database of federal, state and local transportation procurement opportunities on our web site. Please be sure to read the enclosed article on this service, as we think you will find it interesting and valuable.

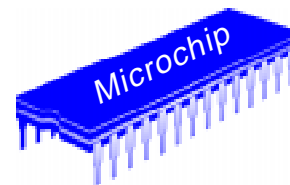
As you proceed to develop new business for your company, it is important that you take into consideration the Year 2000 issues that are also outlined in this newsletter. With careful planning, we can all be better prepared to conduct business in the next century.

Since 1968, September 15 to October 15 has marked the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, signaling the economic and cultural contributions Hispanics make to American life. As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, let us remember the unique and wonderful qualities that not only Hispanics—but each of us contributes to our shared culture.

Identifying Hidden Year 2000 Issues

What does all this hype over “Year 2000 Issues” mean to small businesses? The emphasis that a business places on Year 2000 (Y2K) issues now may have a direct impact on whether they will remain in business or not.

Let’s begin with a quick description of what is meant by Year 2000. Simply stated, computers were programmed to calculate information based on a two digit year (e.g. 1998 is entered into computers as “98”). Two digit date fields, left uncorrected, will result in errors when calculated for or after January 1, 2000. In some instances, “00” represents null numbers or invalid entries. A “00” may also be interpreted as a date which equates to 1900 rather than 2000. These errors could have major business and customer service consequences to industries such as: defense; transportation; financial; telecommunications; suppliers of services such as water, gas and electricity; security systems; appliances; etc. Y2K issues will affect not only mainframe computers, but also your personal computers or any device containing a microchip.



Businesses who specialize in Information Technology are not alone in their quest for fixing Y2K issues. *No business*, regardless of their specialty, is immune to this threat. Y2K issues affecting businesses are both internal and external. Internal factors include any computer related hardware or software owned and/or operated by the business (e.g., copy equipment, personal computers, facsimile machines, printers, etc.).

The General Accounting Office recommends businesses should handle Y2K issues through a five phased approach: awareness, assessment, renovation, testing and implementation. The first step is to raise people’s awareness of the problem. Once armed with facts that define the problem, businesses should assess the scope of their Y2K issues by inventorying systems and deciding which ones to change, replace or discard. For systems requiring changes, begin immediate renovation. All systems, once modified, should be validated and tested. Once all the work has been completed, implementing revised systems is logical. More information

See ‘Y2K’ on next page

DOT’s ‘FY 99 Procurement Forecast’ Now Available

The US Department of Transportation’s (DOT) first *Procurement Forecast* published since the passage of TEA-21 is now available on the web, via Fax On-demand, and in hard copy. The DOT *Procurement Forecast* contains FY 99 contracting opportunities, from DOT’s 12 Operating Administrations, condensed into one convenient resource.



See ‘Procurement Forecast’ next page

OSDBU

Office of Small
and Disadvantaged
Business Utilization





wants to hear from you!! Call us toll-free at 1 800 532-1169 with questions or comments about this newsletter or our website. The Transportation Link’s content may be reprinted without permission.

New Searchable Procurement Database



The OSDBU has assembled a database of transportation procurement opportunities from the CBD, FACNET, State DOTs and other state sources for you to search conveniently in one location.

Benefits:

-  Data is updated daily
-  Includes opportunities that have been announced within the last 30 days
-  You can choose your geographical region and/or category list; and
-  Includes federal, state, and local opportunities

This interface is designed for ease of use. You are 3 clicks away from the most up-to-date DOT procurement opportunities available. Click region - click category - click procurement opportunity. That's it!






Because new opportunities will be posted daily, check back often.

As always, the OSDBU continues to find ways to better serve its valued customers.

For more information, contact Don McCormick at (800) 532-1169 or email dmccormick@basetech.com. To try the application, visit : <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/cfapps/bidline/main.cfm>.

From 'Procurement Forecast' on page 1

The *FY 99 Procurement Forecast* is an essential publication for businesses looking to optimize their strategic business planning process and to develop a reference database of federal procurement small business specialist points-of-contact. In addition, the *Procurement Forecast* provides:

-  Important information in specific procurement categories, with related points of contact
-  Descriptions and requirements of actual procurements
-  The estimated dollar value of the procurement
-  The estimated solicitation release date; and
-  The anticipated type of acquisition strategy (e.g., 8(a) competitive, small business set-aside, etc.)

For access to this key information, visit the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization's web site at: <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/procure.htm>. Fax-on-demand and printed copy requests of the *FY 99 Procurement Forecast* can be obtained by phoning our toll-free number at (800) 532-1169.

For more information, contact Roland Zebina at (800) 532-1169 or email rzebina@basetech.com. To view the web site, go to : <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/consolic.htm>.



From 'Y2K' on page 1

tion regarding this five-phase approach can be found in detail on the following DOT web site: www.y2ktransport.dot.gov/solution.htm.

Businesses are, however, equally affected by external influences that they may have little or no control over. Have you asked for assurances from your software vendors, hardware vendors, suppliers, lenders, borrowers, business partners, landlord's (elevator's, HVAC, fire protection) and others that they are Y2K compliant? You must test your systems and their interfaces with other systems in 1999. Obtain written certification from these business partners as to their Y2K compliancy. Although vendors may supply written certification, business owners should establish contingency plans. Even the best-laid plans can result in unexpected results. Remember that *'a good offense is the best defense.'*

In addition, small businesses who provide services to the federal or state governments must be savvy enough to question Y2K 'boiler plate' phrases which are being included in new contracts. The Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Section 39.106 does address Y2K compliancy. Prior to signing a contract, review any FAR clauses included and review the contract for any discussion on Y2K compliancy. As a vendor, if such clauses exist, you could be held liable for any problems or failures that may occur as a result of failed products or services which were provided by your firm. If a third party vendor provides parts, software, products, etc. ensure that the item purchased meets Y2K compliancy in accordance with the definitions provided by the Agency with whom the contract will be with. If you wish to buy a product or service from a vendor that is not compliant, you need to ask *now* when they plan to be compliant.

For more information on Year 2000 compliancy, visit www.y2ktransport.dot.gov/solution.htm



Engineering Successful Concepts

This month's *Success Story* features a husband and wife duo that in July of 1983 started Fuentez Systems Concepts, Inc., (FSC), a Charleston, SC,

based engineering firm specializing in software engineering, systems engineering and systems integration in the information technology arena. For the past year and a half, FSC has been the prime

contractor handling 15 of the Coast Guard's mission critical software systems at their Operation Systems Center in Martinsburg, WV.

During this time, FSC has earned 100 percent award fee on this Cost Plus Award Fee (CPAF) contract for six consecutive quarters. This achievement is unique in federal contracting.

"We have taken a problem-solving approach to our work there," says FSC President Ray Fuentez. "And obviously we are delighting the customer."

The Coast Guard is not the only 'delighted' FSC customer given that corporate revenue could reasonably reach \$30 million this year. In fact, FSC has grown consistently since late in 1983 when Fuentez's wife, Espetición, joined the company as Chairman of the Board and the company expanded their line of business beyond engineering consulting.

In FSC's first year of operation they had one employee and generated \$140,000 in net revenue; in the second, they had two employees with incrementally higher revenue. In 1985, FSC applied for 8(a) status and they won their first 8(a) contract in 1988.

Today, FSC employs nearly two hun-

dred highly skilled administrative and technical people, and corporate earnings are growing about ten to twelve percent annually.

In explaining FSC's success, Mr Fuentez says: "One of the reasons I feel we've succeeded like we have, is because our employees are consistently the most loyal people I know. It has always been my philosophy that the best way to ensure good customer service is to ensure good employee service. I feel like I work for my *employees*."

Perhaps nothing better illustrates FSC's innovative approach to problem solving and employee relations than when confronted with a skilled labor shortage while administering the Martinsburg, WV Coast Guard project.

Exercising a seldom used provision in the contract for an intern program, Project Manager Bill Bowen (now an FSC Senior Vice President) signed FSC up to participate in Virginia Tech's (VPI) annual Job-Fair looking for talent. There Bowen landed 6 eager-to-work interns before heading to nearby Shepherd's College in the West Virginia panhandle for 2 more sign-ups.

The next step for FSC was to develop a student co-op program with Shepherd's College, where students work part-time while attending classes. Subsequently, six of those former co-op students (now graduated) are FSC employees.

To date, FSC is sweeping the region's campuses (University of Virginia, University of West Virginia and University of Maryland to name a few) looking for more prospects.

"At our high water mark we had 20 students working for us," says Fuentez. "And the retention rate has been close to phenomenal."

FSC is helping a West Virginia labor market that traditionally loses its technical talent to nearby Washington DC.

"Not only have we solved a criti-

"Turning down job offers to start our own company was a little bit risky to say the least."

—Ray Fuentez

cal personnel shortage for ourselves and the Coast Guard," says Mr Fuentez. "We give promising students meaningful summer work and the Coast Guard wins, Fuentez wins, and certainly the students win."

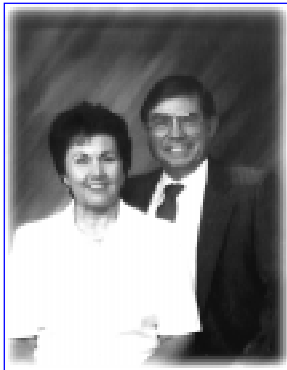
Lately, FSC is leveraging its engineering expertise to solve 'Year 2000' (Y2K) issues in the Coast Guard's Operations Center.

"Since January we have been concentrating on Y2K," says Bowen.

In fact, an FSC 'Y2K' team assembled a simple, but effective workbook that acts as a step-by-step, guided process through the Y2K problem. Bowen states that the workbook has not only been approved by DOT's Inspector General, but was taken back to the Office of the Secretary of Transportation and is now used by the Federal Aviation Administration and other modal administrations as a reference guide.

"Starting a business was probably the toughest decision we ever made," says Mr Fuentez, a retired combat Naval Officer. "At that time (1982), the economy wasn't performing nearly as well as it now. Turning down job offers to start our own company was a little bit risky to say the least."

Certainly FSC's initiative paid off — for everyone.



Espetición & Ray Fuentez
have been married 37 years

For more information about Fuentez Systems Concepts, Inc. call (843) 745-9496 or fax (843) 566-9372 and visit their website at <http://www.fuentez.com>.



Follow the Money

This month's *Link* features the Colorado's Dept. of Transportation (CDOT) web site containing over 150 highway construction projects statewide all being bid on and built by private contractors. This page, and other State and US DOT operating administration procurement sites, are assembled in one central location at OSDBU's web site, <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/programs/states.html>.

At <http://www.dot.state.co.us/public/index.htm> you'll find a comprehensive list of current and upcoming projects. One example is a Colorado highway extension project which extends C-470 from I-70 to 6th Ave. in Golden. This is phase 1B and has an Oct. 15 'letting' date.

In addition to this project, CDOT's web site includes a 'Weekly Bid Bulletin' button to view the current number of pending bids; the companies involved in the bidding process; and contract winners. For 8(a) subcontractors and suppliers, CDOT offers a valuable resource for tracking bid results and obtaining subcontracting and prime contracting opportunities.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR October/November 1998

DATE	EVENT	CONTACT
October 12-16	The 5 th World Congress on ITS Seoul, Korea (Special Travel Rates Available)	http://www.itsa.org K.Stacy or B.Jessup kstacy@itsa.org bjessup@itsa.org fax: (202) 484-3483
October 18-21	National Minority Supplier Development Council The Convention Center Miami Beach, Florida	Devida Lipscombe (212) 944-2430
October 21	Minority Business Resource Center Advisory Committee Meeting (open to the public) Washington, DC	Marie A. Hendricks (800) 532-1169
October 28-29	Native American Trade Fair and Conference "Building Partnerships with Native Americans" Albuquerque, NM	Jane Spriggs (407) 306-6904
October 28-29	FAA 2 nd East Coast Small Business Conference FAA Southern Regional Office College Park, GA	Michael O'Neil or Tom Needham at 1(800) 878-2940 ext.237 or ext. 245
November 4	Minority Small Business Section 8(a) Program (attendance by reservation only) Chicago, Ill.	SBA (312) 353-4528
November 12	Creative Ways to Finance Your Business Nat'l Satellite Conference Series for Women Entrepreneurs	Edward Jones (302) 239-9401

<http://osdbuweb.dot.gov>

US Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary of Transportation

Base Technologies, Inc.
1749 Old Meadow Road
Suite 500
McLean, VA 22102

Address Correction Requested